

PHOTOGRAPHIC VIEWS
IN
MADURA
—
NORMAN
PART 3



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PHOTOGRAPHIC VIEWS

IN

MADURA.

BY CAPTAIN L. TRIPE, GOVERNMENT PHOTOGRAPHER,

MADRAS PRESIDENCY.

PART III.

1095-60a.
With Descriptive Notes,

BY

MARTIN NORMAN, ESQ.,

M. C. S.

1858.



LIST OF VIEWS WITH DESCRIPTIONS.

The Great Pagoda.

The following pictures are representations of various parts of the great Pagoda of Madura, dedicated to Shiva, under the name of Sundareswaram or Chokkalingam, "lord of beauty," and his consort Parvati, commonly called by the Sanscrit name Minakshi, or in Tamil Ankaial-Kannammal, meaning "the fish eyed one;" she whose eyes resemble the fish termed in Tamil kayal.

It is situated in the centre of the town of Madura. Its form is an oblong square. The Eastern face is 240 yards long; the southern 284 yards; the western 243 yards, and the northern 278 yards. The height of all is uniform 124 yards, or 36 feet 9 inches. Above ground, as will be seen, the wall is of cut stone, with a brick parapet. In the centre of each face is a gateway surmounted by a lofty tower or Gopuram. The Eastern face has an additional entrance between the centre gateway and the S. E. angle of the outer wall (see view No. 13.) These four gopurams or towers (see views Nos 1 and 9) are about 156 feet in height; The southern Gopuram is slightly higher than the others, measuring 157 feet 6 inches to the top of the pinnacles. The basement of all is of stone, the superstructure of brick and mortar. The tower on the northern face of the Pagoda is devoid of the ornaments and pinnacles with which the rest are so freely decorated, and is hence called the Mottai Gopuram or Bald Tower. The whole temple consists of four enclosures one within the other. The innermost one is called Garbha griha (from Sanskrit garbha, womb; griha, house, abode) and contains the Lingam or symbol of the god Shiva, and the image of Minakshi his consort, together with subordinate images of both the god and goddess which are used in processions &c. Into this Europeans are not admitted; at the gate is the Dhvajastambha, a wooden or stone pillar overlaid with copper, to which offerings in the shape of cloths &c. are laid at certain festivals. Beyond this pillar no Europeans are admitted; the reason why free ingress is allowed to some large pagodas and not to smaller ones, appears to be that in the lesser edifices this Dhvajastambha, which marks the entrance of the sanctum sanctorum, is so close to the outer gate that no one can enter without passing it. But the liberty granted in this respect to persons not Hindus, depends very much on local customs. The Garbha griha, as the receptacle of the principal and permanent idol of the place, is surmounted by a structure called in Sanskrit Vimana. This in the temples in the north of India is, as it should be, the principal portion of the edifice, excelling the rest of the structure in height and grandeur. But in the south of India (except in small temples where the Vimana is the only structure of note in the whole edifice) the Pagoda in Tanjore appears to be the only instance where the structure surmounting the Garbha griha does not play an entirely subordinate part to the gopurams or outer towers (surmounting the gateways) on which all the care of the architect appears to be bestowed. The Vimana in Madura is not visible from the exterior except from an eminence. Mr. Fergusson (Picturesque Architecture of Hindustan, Introduction P. 19) accounts for this by supposing that "when from any fortunate circumstances a temple became famous or particularly sacred, instead of pulling it down and building another, or adding to its size by concentric layers as the Buddhists would have done, they revered so much the actual building that they preferred surrounding it with splendor to touching or adding to the Fane itself.

This process has evidently been gone through in the case of the Temple at Madura. The Vimana surmounting the abode of the god has never been touched, and is never interfered with at present further than to regild, when necessary, the copper dome which surmounts it; while the devotion of rulers and private individuals has shown itself in the three enclosures which surrounds the sacred object, with their lofty towers, numberless corridors and pillars, and elaborate carved work. The Vimana of a Pagoda generally resembles in design and ornamental detail, the towers or Gopurams, but it differs in shape from them: the latter are oblong and surmounted by pinnacles, and at the extremities of the top two ornaments resembling the expanded hood of the cobra; while the Vimana is square; each successive layer diminishes in size while the summit consists of a flat-topped hemispheroid, or as at Tanjore a sphere or oblate spheroid of masonry, above this again a spike is often placed which forms the extreme summit of the building. Since most of the different structures contained within the outer wall of the Pagoda at Madura will be found described under their own Numbers, it seems proper in this place to give the Hindu account of the origin of the Temple.

The Lingam itself or principal object of adoration, as typical of the masculine energy of Shiva the supreme, is considered by the Hindus to be swayambha or self-existent, they further consider the base of it to be planted in Patala or the infernal regions. It was discovered to mortals, according to the legend, in the following way.

In the days of Kalashekhar Pandyan whose Metropolis was at Manavur, one Dhannajaya, a merchant, was benighted in the forest or Kadamba trees (Nauclea cadamba) which overspread the Peninsula after the deluge, and discovered the image under a tree. He worshipped, and informed the King of what he had seen; the Monarch was commanded by the god in a vision to erect a temple in the wilderness over his image.

He accordingly set about building the Pagoda which he completed; and the Town of Madura at the same time. Shortly afterwards the king had a daughter supernaturally born to him, whom Shiva afterwards made his consort, or more correctly speaking Parvati became incarnate as the daughter of Malaya Dhuraja King of Madura, son of Kalashekhar Pandyan; After the death of that King, Shiva in person ruled Madura under the name of Sundara or Sundareswara Pandyan.

Shiva and Parvati have been long worshipped under these names, and as is usual the males and females born among Saiva families in the neighbourhood, are extensively named after the favourite deities; thus males are called Sundaram, Sundarappa and Chokkars Chokkappa, Chokkalingum, Somasundaram &c. and female, Parvati Minakshi, Minu, &c. &c. The Temple has been largely endowed by former rulers. Under the British, the lands formerly belonging to the institution have in great part been resumed, and an allowance of about 40,000 Rupees per annum is disbursed from the collectors Treasury. Under the present policy however of disconnecting the ruling power in toto from the religious concerns of the natives, measures are being taken for vesting in the Pagoda Trustees (who are appointed by the Collector of the District, the nomination resting with the people interested in the Pagoda worship) Lands equivalent in value to the present money disbursements.

No. I.

The East Gopuram of the Great Pagoda.

No. II.

The Viravasuntarayan Mundapam.

The View represents the interior of a Mundapam in the great Pagoda which is said to have been built by Muttu Virappa Nayak, the elder brother of Tirumalai Nayak by whom he was succeeded on the throne. The reign of Muttu Virappa comprised the end of the sixteenth, and commencement of the seventeenth centuries (1585-1605 according to some lists, though the authorities do not seem to be agreed on the subject.). He was called Viravasuntarayan, and the Mundapam represented is named after him. The height of it is 27 feet, length 218, and breadth 60 feet, being divided into 3 aisles, the centre being 26 feet broad.

No. III.

Entrance to the thousand pillared Mundapam in the great Pagoda

Rain Raz tells us that Temples consist of the Garbha griha or inner adytum, the antarala or anti-temple, and the arddha mantapa or front portico; but large Temples have three or four successive Porticoes attached to them in front called arddha Mantapa, Maha Mantapa &c.

This Maha Mandapa or great portico is generally in the Temples of the south called the ayiram-tin Mandapam, or thousand pillared Mundapam, either nominally or really possessing this number of columns. Mr. Fergusson says that the one at Chillumbaram has exactly 1000 pillars.

The view shows the entrance to the Hall of a thousand columns in the great Temple at Madura from the Viravasuntarayan Mundapam. There is a small Fane in the centre occupying a space sufficient to contain the remaining 15 pillars. The exact number of columns is 985. It is supposed to have been built in the time of Tirumalai Nayak. The Front of the Mundapam is adorned with granite statues representing different castes of worshippers. The pillars to the right and left hide them from view in the Photograph.

No. IV.

The Muduramiar Mundapam.

This forms part of the great portico to the side of the great Pagoda dedicated to the goddess Minakshi; the statue near the entrance is sculptured in granite and represents the effigy of the builder of the Mundapam (by name Muduramiah) performing his devotions before a shrine in the intercolumniations on the right and therefore out of sight.

No. V.

Side Colonnade in the Murothappa saravcar Mundapam.

No. VI.

The inner Facade of the gateway of the East Gopuram.

Built of cut stone to just above the top of the gateway which is about 30 feet high. The Mundapam in front is the Viravasuntarayan entirely of stone, the roof being formed of slabs of granite.

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No. VII.

The Kulayana Mundapam.

This is one of the places where the marriage ceremony (Tamil kalyanam) of the god with his consort, is celebrated. The Mundapam is said to have been built by Vijayaranga Chokkanatha Nayak one of the successors of Tirumalai Nayak. He reigned for 24 years from A. D. 1707.

No. VIII.

Tatta Suddhi Mundapam.

This Mundapam with 16 pillars is of strikingly elegant proportions, and situated inside the great Pagoda between the 1000 pillared Mundapam and the shrine of the god Sundareshwara. It is said to have been built by one Venkadeshwara Mudali the confidential agent of a British Officer about A. D. 1770. The idol halts in it on certain occasions after being carried in procession and before re-entering the inner temple, and a certain ceremony takes place, from which the Mundapam is called Tatta suddhi Mundapam (from tatta suddhi plate cleaning.)

No. IX.

The Western Gopuram.

No. X.

The outer Prakarum, or corridor around the Temple of the god Sundareshwara.

The architectural arrangement of this Prakarum is very striking, the small shrine at the lower end breaks the uniformity in a very pleasing manner. Along these cloisters at stated periods every day the idols are carried in procession heralded by the brahmins chanting their praises to the beat of tom-tom.

No. XI.

The Pagoda Jewels.

The uses of these are to adorn the idols or their Vahanams on festival occasions. Those for the former consist of richly jewelled crowns, necklaces and ornaments, to depend therefrom, and others to be fastened on the forehead of the idols. For the Vahanams stirrups of gold and bridles of pearls (the slighter ones) or of coral (the thicker.) The large ornaments in the back ground when in use are so adjusted to the Mulasthanam Lingam as to represent a cobra coiling round it with its hood raised.

No. XII.

Outer Prakarum (or corridor) on the North side of the Temple of the god Sundareshwara.

Three of the vahanams or vehicles of the god are shown in this corridor of the Temple. They are the ashwa or horse vahanam, ani or elephant vahanam, annunthia or monkey vahanam. Each one of the deities has some method of conveyance (Sansa: vahana) peculiar and consecrated to him. That of Shiva is the bull called Nandi or Basava. This animal is sometimes worshipped as the principal deity of the temple, especially in Mysore; but he is generally venerated in the shape of a rude stone figure of a bull placed before the entrance to temples sacred to some form of Shiva. The three

vahanams in the picture are used for the conveyance of the god and his consort at various festivals. They are made of copper gilt, or wood profusely decorated with paint and tinsel, &c.

No. XIII. & XIV.

Views of the sacred Tank in the great Pagoda.

These represent the sacred Tank within the great Pagoda. The East Gopuram is in the centre of View No. 13, the Gopuram to the right surmounts the entrance to the Garbhagriham, while to the extreme right the summit of the Vimana may be seen. On certain festival days the god disports himself on a gaily ornamented raft or teppam, the trellised wall which separates a portion of the tank from the the surrounding corridor was constructed to enable women of rank (probably the wives of Tirumalai Nayak who built much of the Pagoda) to see the ceremony without being observed themselves. The origin of this Tank is described in the Kala Puranam as follows. Previously to the discovery by the Merchant Dhananjaya of the sacred lingam the deities who were assembled meditating upon and adoring it, expressed a desire for a Tank of surpassing excellence, upon which the complaisant Shiva struck his trisulam or trident into the ground in the vicinity, and on withdrawing it the holy stream of Ganga appeared. This was enclosed within proper bounds and called Pottamarai or the golden lotus, which flower grew in the Tank.

Special sanctity attaches to the reservoir, and whenever the visits of gods or men to Madura are described in the chronicles of the place, bathing in the Tank is mentioned as one of their exploits. No living creature is to be found in it, the unimaginative European would be apt to attribute this to the horribly filthy condition of the water, which is of about the colour and consistence of (though scarcely as fragrant as,) green pea soup; The devout Hindu however would inform us that a certain Heron was once sorely tempted by hunger to eat some small fishes which he observed falling from the hair of some Rishis who were bathing in the Tank, but recollecting that the place was holy, it abstained, and as a reward was not only received by Shiva into Kailasa, but received permission to make any request it might choose; this was "that no living creature might henceforward be produced in the tank lest any unfortunate Heron might succumb to the temptation which itself had overcome. This request was granted, and "the golden Lotus Tank produces no living creature to this day."

The Pottamarai is oblong; measuring from N. to S. 48 yards, and from E. to W. 66 yards.

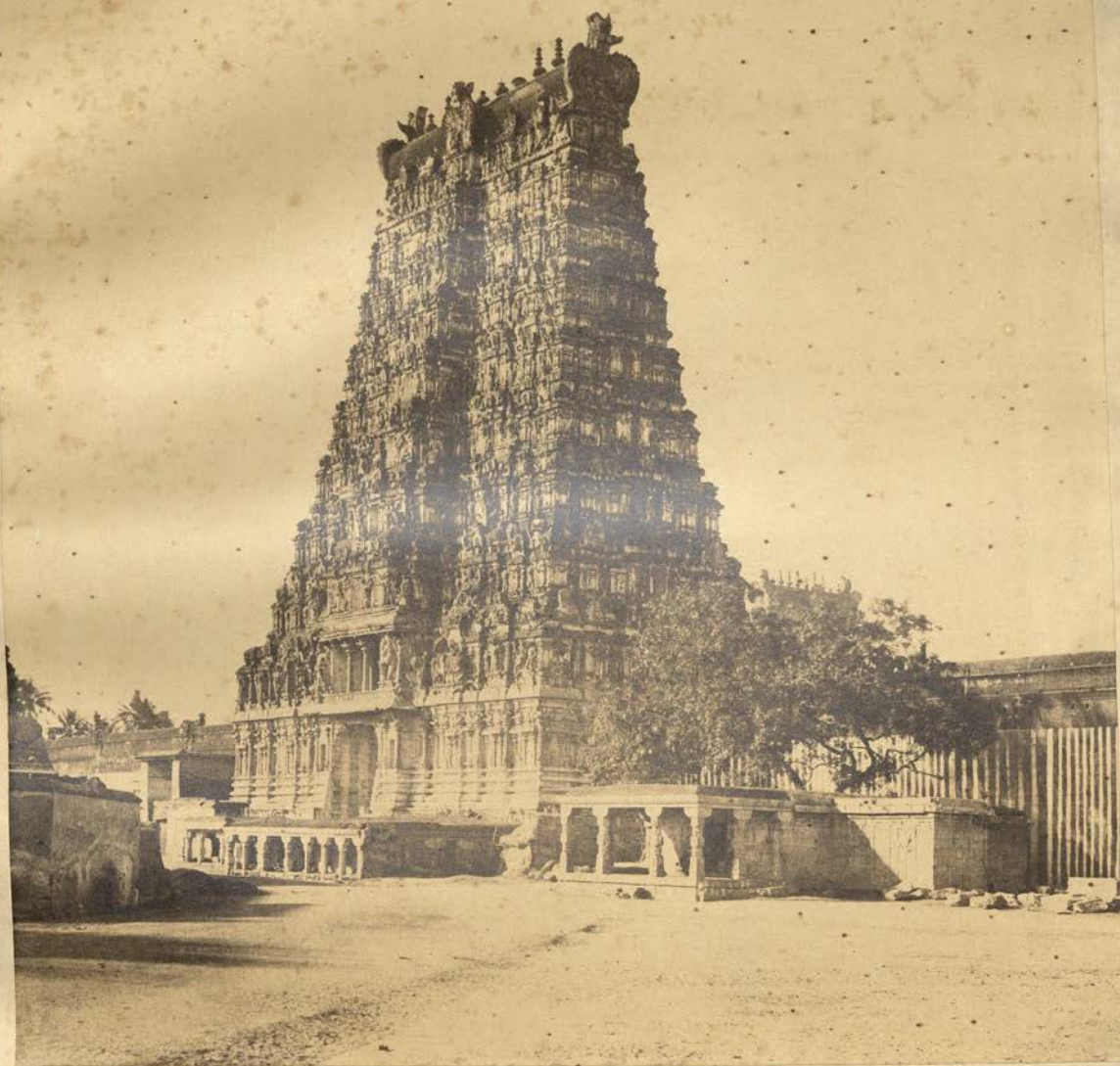
No. XV.

Entrance to the Temple of Minakshi in the great Pagoda.

Here is shewn the principal entrance to the great Temple. The subject of the group over the doorway is the marriage of Sundareshwara with his consort Minakshi.

To the left of the doorway leaning against the wall are spears used in sacred Processions, and a sun screen to hold before the idol's face.

In the panel to the left of the Doorway, above the spears, Ganesa is represented in the corresponding panel on the other side Subrahmanya; both sons of Shiva. The raised platform to the right, inside the doorway, and all the ground adjacent and opposite to it, on each side of the passage, is let out to money changers, cloth merchants, vegetable and betel sellers, &c. by the Trustees of the Pagoda.

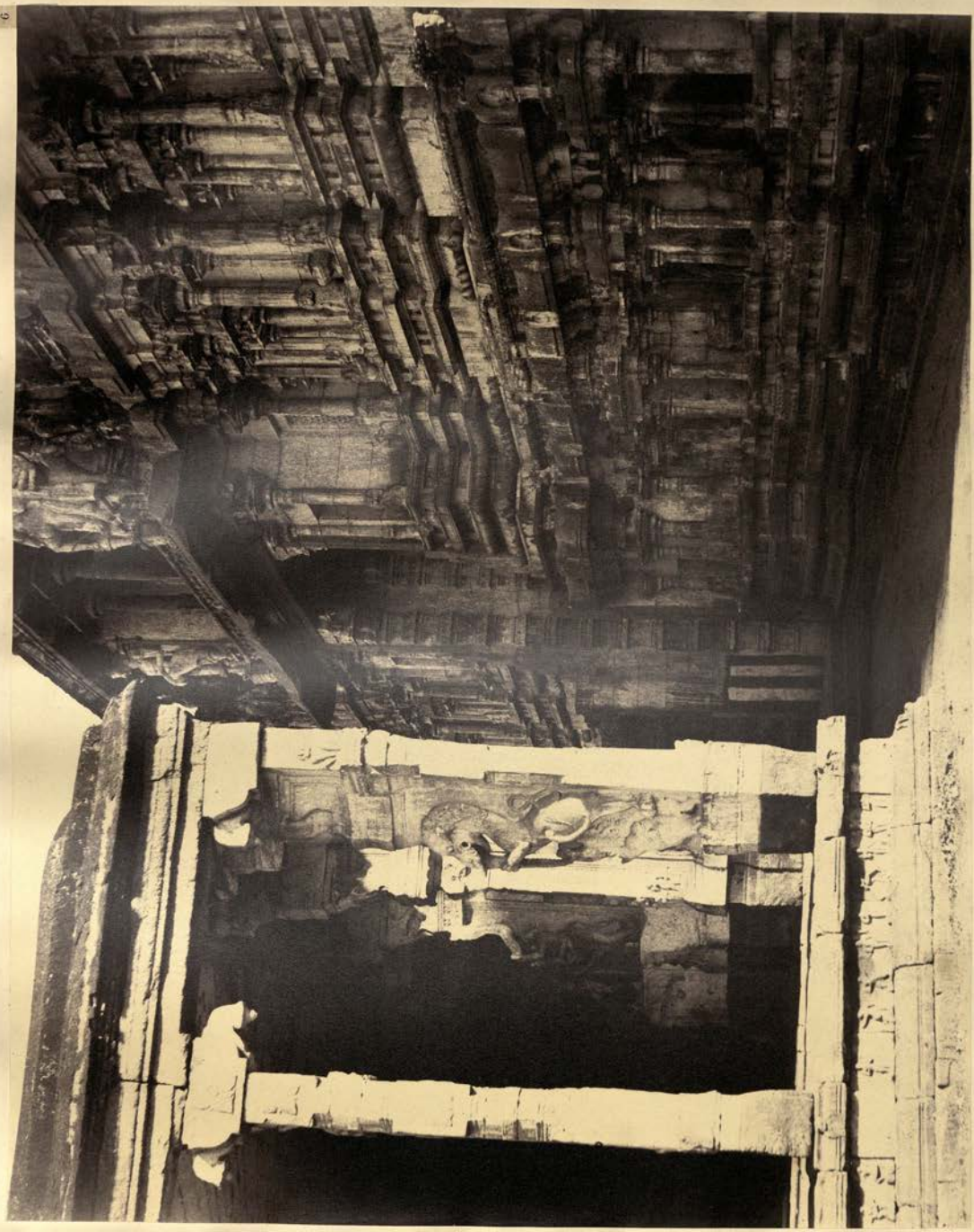












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